

News Release



Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
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[Cold Springs NWR](#) • [Columbia NWR](#) • [Conboy Lake NWR](#) • [Hanford Reach National Monument](#)
[McKay Creek NWR](#) • [McNary NWR](#) • [Saddle Mountain NWR](#) • [Toppenish NWR](#) • [Umatilla NWR](#)

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MID-COLUMBIA RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES ISSUE FIRE PREVENTION ORDER

Due to summer fire conditions, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has imposed a complete ban on activities likely to start a fire on refuges in the Mid-Columbia River Complex. Included in the order are the Hanford Reach National Monument and Columbia, Cold Springs, Conboy Lake, McKay Creek, McNary, Toppenish and Umatilla National Wildlife Refuges. Building any fire, including the use of charcoal briquettes and cooking stoves, is prohibited. Also banned are fireworks, smoking outside of an enclosed vehicle, and operation of any motor without an approved and working spark arrester.

The 2010 fire season has fortunately not produced many fires so far. However, the current dry conditions and the upcoming holiday weekend could change that. FWS Fire Management Officer, Chris Schulte, noted that, "Although the weather has been cooler, wetter, and more overcast than we are all accustomed to, it has resulted in increased amounts of cheat grass and fine fuels. Cheat grass amounts greatly influence fire spread. Larger volumes of non-native grasses create optimal burning conditions on the Hanford Reach National Monument and all of the refuges in the Mid-Columbia River Complex. Conditions are ripe for fires that are fast spreading, potentially large in size, and challenging to manage," he added.

– FWS –

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.